

BBC Learning English  
Words in the News  
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*Controversial census in Kenya*



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*The first national census since 1999 is taking place in Kenya. It is controversial because it asks Kenyans which tribe they belong to. Some feel this goes against efforts to heal wounds following last year's post-election ethnic violence. Will Ross reports:*

"Which **tribe** are you?" That's the question which has made the **census** in Kenya controversial. Tribal divisions **are deeply rooted** in Kenyan society and many people are proud of their tribe. But after last year's **inter-tribal violence** in which more than one thousand people were killed, there are those who feel **the ethnicity question should have been dropped** as part of the effort **to promote national healing**. Some people say they will simply answer, "I am a Kenyan." The government says all the questions are intended to help **the authorities** to plan better.

Kenyans may have been encouraged to stay at home and **be counted** but one of the toughest challenges facing the census officials will be finding Kenya's **nomadic pastoralists**. Due to **an ongoing drought** they are travelling further, even crossing international borders.

Will Ross, BBC News, Nairobi

## Vocabulary and definitions

<b>tribe</b>	group of people, often of related families, who live together, share the same language, culture and history. The group often lives far away from towns or cities
<b>census</b>	official enquiry to find out the number of people who live in a country and other information about them. A census is carried out by government officials who go to people's homes and ask questions about the people who live there
<b>are deeply rooted</b>	have a very long history and are very important to people
<b>inter-tribal violence</b>	fighting between people from different tribes
<b>the ethnicity question should have been dropped</b>	the census shouldn't ask people what tribe they belong to
<b>to promote national healing</b>	to help the people who were fighting before to come together in peace so that the whole country becomes more peaceful for everybody
<b>the authorities</b>	government officials, civil servants and other people in charge of running a country
<b>be counted</b>	be included (here, in the census)
<b>nomadic pastoralists</b>	people who don't live in a house in one particular place but who walk throughout a very large area of land and live on food they find from the earth
<b>an ongoing drought</b>	a continuing lack of rain

More on this story: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/8217637.stm>

Read and listen to the story and the vocabulary online:

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/language/wordsinthenews/2009/08/090824\\_witn\\_kenya\\_census.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/language/wordsinthenews/2009/08/090824_witn_kenya_census.shtml)